

THE AMERICAN GIRL.

MRS. LESLIE WRITES ABOUT HER AND ABOUT OTHER TYPES.

The Leading Traits of the Maidens of Various Lands Contrasted—The American Girl Said to Be a Una with a Fire Tipped Wand.

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HO can help being fond of young girls? I don't mean in the way the young men are fond of them, but as an observer of

human nature and of Vanity Fair may well be. There is a certain freshness and sweetness and evanescence about them like the charm of flowers, but terries and birds, and besides that a graciousness and attractiveness like that one feels in all frisky, confiding, fond young creatures like kittens and lambs and suchlike helpless, frolicsome and playful creatures.

For myself I am devoted to girls wherever I may be, and I have been, I believe, in most parts of the habitable globe. Everywhere I have found girls, and everywhere there have been many traits of identity and some of difference. All were nice, and I do not know that if I would tell which I like the best.

Our own girls certainly have the most character; also, as a rule, they have the most beauty. But the question is, Are not they, so far at least, as the great cities go—are not they more young women of the world than girls *pure et simple*? There has been a great deal said both at home and abroad upon this subject, but it is one that is always coming up again, and we should not blink the discussion of it.

The American girl not enough girl, or is she too much of a girl?

Is it not clearly true that the American girl accepts, in fact assumes, responsibility that no other girl in the world could dream of doing, and the consequence is that she sometimes appears lacking in that modest humility and timid appeal to her elders which is one of the charms of certain other girls; for, in fact, are apt to mistake her calm self assertion for boldness and want of self respect, and acting upon this mistake they sometimes meet with rebuffs so startling that they rush into another mistake and set down the American girl as a shrewd, a sharp tongued and sharp tempered vixen, and please themselves by saying that no man in his senses would ever venture to marry her.

In fact, the American grape is for a sour grape.

And yet how could we wish this freedom of action and speech or this capacity for self defense and aggressive warfare less, when we consider that these very traits are the foundation of American character, and that these very girls are to become the mothers of the men of the future?

An American girl fought through two years of the Revolution and gained among her associates a reputation most honorable to her modesty as a woman, although she suspected her sex to the last. George Washington was an American girl, and more than one or two others have emulated her noble courage under similar circumstances. American girls have taken their fathers' places in command of ships, in the conduct of flight from Indians, in the saving of burning houses; in fact, I doubt not with a little research one could find an American girl in nearly every position of trust or of command which a man of her age and physical ability could fill. Shall we, then, desire to see her watered down to the level of the shrinking and blushing *ingénue* which is the French ideal of girlhood?

But on the other hand, the girls who are called to fight in the ranks, or to "man" lifeboats, or rescue their helpless mothers from Indians, or to save burning buildings, are a very small proportion of the whole, and this very courage and ability are apt in private life to make a restless and uncontrollable and petulant and quarreling character. Our Grace Darlings in city society are very apt to get the name of being "fast," "manish" or "loud," just because they have such an amount of surplus energy and force of character. Besides this our girls have another splendid quality which is apt to lead foreigners to make mistakes about them. They are not afraid of men, because they feel themselves perfectly competent to control any circumstances in which they may be placed and to meet any attack that may be made. They are Una who meet the lion with perfect tranquillity, because they know they can lead him whither they will. The lion's instinct generally leads him to the same conviction, but in case he is stupid and doesn't see it the American Una is quite capable of converting her lit sly into a wad of white hot steel and giving Master Lion a lesson he does not soon forget. Thera! I suppose no girl in the world so perfectly capable of taking care of herself and doing it well as the American girl. In her womanly virtue she is not to the Irish girl who, as is well known, is the most virtuous of her sex, and in judgment, coolness and knowledge of the world she is by far her superior.

In fact, I think we may honestly claim

DAY BROS., DAY BROS.,

Caterers * Caterers

ENTERTAINMENTS SUPPLIED

IN ANY LOCALITY.

DO NOT HESITATE

TO WRITE FOR AN ESTIMATE.

that the failings of our American girls are simply what the French call "the faults of their virtues;" that is, the somewhat troublesome excess of unused played strength.

Daisy Miller has passed into a proverb. But is she a type? I never have forgiven Mr. James for some traits in his portrait, and yet there is a great deal of truth in the innocent audacity, the fearless criticism and the simple carelessness of public opinion that stigmatizes heroine, and one cannot but feel a certain tenderness for the poor child, although one is so provoked at her, or rather at her antics.

But fascinating as every one allows the American girl to be, her English cousins are dangerous rivals. The stately growth and clear complexion, the calm eyes and buoyant mouths, the well-developed figures and honest simplicity of manner are the eyes of many men more attractive than the independent vivacity of the American. Two types of maidenhood are not unlike the natural scenes amid which they have been perfected; the fragrant breath of western prairies, the graceful freedom of virgin forests, the sparkling rush of mighty rivers and the fearless beauty of airy waterfalls seem to have tempered the clay and infused the blood of the American girl, while her passive English cousin reminds one of stately parks and well-ordered gardens, lawns of velvet and meads knee deep in clover where plaid kine browse as if they were posing for Sir Edwin Landseer's brush.

In sauntering around England—and one can see neither a country nor its people except in sauntering—the predominant idea one receives is of long and patient culture. Every foot of arable ground has been turned over and over through a thousand years of husbandry; the grass is not so much grass as the elaboration of man's energies and the chemist's skill; the trees that shaded Elizabeth and the second Charles have been preserved and cared for to the last days of Victoria; everything, in fact, bears the mark of man's zealous improvement of natural advantages, and the girls are no exception to the rule.

Those of the upper class—that is to say, those of the landed gentry—whose fathers and mothers and ancestors for hundreds of years have been cultivated as assiduously as the grass, and the corn lands, and the trees, and show the effect of cultivation just as blood horses and Devon cows show it; the clear skins, the bright eyes and clear cut features and shapely limbs show breeding long and careful; and the conventional ideas, the narrow range of thought, the value of precedent and the importance of precedence, all show breeding too. They show the training of the mind in long established formulas and the molding of manners to long established traditions, so that the English baby is born artificial, and as a rule grows up in the same condition.

Of course there are exceptions to this rule, even among young girls, but these variants are as rare as neither underlined nor outlined in the own imagination, what is spontaneous independence of thought in an American girl is set down as suspicious eccentricity in an English girl, and in fact the latter never can possess that charm of unconsciousness which marks the vagaries of our own lasses; there are too many warning voices upraised, there is too much Saturday Reviewing for the English girl to step one foot outside the beaten track without knowing it, while our own girls follow their impulses very much as the wind does and generally come to as little harm.

But each type of girl has her charm, and we would not if we could change either for the other. There is charm in diversity and harmony in contrast.

Crossing the channel or the narrow seas, we come upon more girls and thoroughly new types, and yet are not prepared to set them in a place of inferiority.

The French girl is in a condition of slow transition; the *jeune fille* of the last century has given way in the house of her foster mother, and her girlhood is a short or seventeen years old to be presented to her affianced husband. Perhaps she liked him and perhaps she did not; nobody inquired and nobody cared; the alliance was arranged by the parents on both sides, and the *jeune fille* at least acquiesced without choice or opinion.

In those days there was no such thing as a French girl, for she was repressed almost out of existence, and only began to live, and generally very wisely, after her marriage. But the slow, sure tooth of Time has eaten away very much of tradition in France and done more than the many revolutions in setting the young women free. Liberty, that is to say the French idea of liberty, is in the air, and the women breathe it, as well as fathers and brothers. Women, even young girls, begin to realize that they are individuals and possess souls and minds as well as bodies, and the knowledge emboldens them to think, to speak and to act as once they never would have dreamed of doing.

Convents are a good deal out of fashion nowadays, and Adele ventures to form the opinion that Gustave is more to her than Adelphi ever though the former a *bon port*; still, the *jeune fille* has looked over the fence at least; and this look is often preparatory to leaping, but the process of emancipation is sometimes a timid and hesitating one, and the French girl of our day will never acquire the freedom of the American maiden, nor is it desirable that she should, for she cannot in one or two generations be trained to use it with discretion. Liberty of speech and action must be based upon deep convictions of right and wrong; there must be a moral law to replace the loss of conventionalism and tradition before it is safe to throw them aside, and perhaps in no country outside of America can a child be born into that atmosphere of self government and self protection that gives her peculiar nature to the American girl.

But turning for a moment to another great division of Christendom, let us

glance at the German girl, who differs materially from each of those already mentioned. Of course we all know that the Teutonic soul is trained to housewifery from her cradle; that even fraillings of high degree are forced to go through a course of pickling and preserving, of confectionery and cake making; are taught to look after the house linen and watch the movements of the servants with a diligence unknown to most housekeepers. But this utilitarianism is not the mere predominant trait of the German girl—I mean the daughters of the nobility. At we would call the society girls of Germany; the most salient point in the characters of such as I have met has been their pride.

We speak of Spanish of English hautier and of Russian arrogance, but to my mind not one of them equals the all pervading, all dominating and perfectly spontaneous pride of a German girl in her sixteen quarters of nobility, and her firm conviction that no merit, no education, no natural gifts or acquired advantages can in any way fit a person not "well born" to stand upon an equality with herself, or above all to aspire to her hand. To make a *meilleur* is the mind of the German franklin a little worse than to join the Mormons and become a thirteenth wife.

MOUNTAIN VOLCANO IN ALASKA DEFIES APPROACH.

Many Attempts Have Been Made to Reach the Giant, but It Lies So Far North That the Absence of Vegetation Has Rendered It Inaccessible.

The grandest mountain of North America has not yet been visited by explorers.

It is an active volcano called Wrangell, situated in the interior of Alaska, and its frost wreathed dome forms presumably the apex of the continent.

Mount Wrangell lies about 300 miles north of the celebrated Mount St. Elias and is in the center of a region enshrouded in mystery. Gigantic mountain ranges rise like terraces one upon the other, guarding in their midst this snow monster of the north.

About forty years ago a party of Russian explorers on the Copper river, of Alaska, first sighted the peak away to the northeast, and being duly impressed with its majesty conferred upon it the title of their honored governor, Baron Wrangell. They made no attempt, however, to reach the mountain, it being in the country of hostile natives and presenting such apparently insurmountable obstacles to approach.

Several other companies of Russians made partial ascents of the Copper river about the same time and met with disaster. One party of seventeen, under Steberinkoff, was massacred by the natives. A new knowledge of the Copper river was obtained, and no approach was made to the volcano.

It was not until 1881 that another attempt was made at exploration in the Copper river region. Then Lieutenant Allen, one of the most daring men who ever entered Alaska, forced his way with several white companions up the Copper nearly to its source and circled half way around the Mount Wrangell district, viewing the mighty peak from a distance of forty or fifty miles, but finding no opportunity to reach and ascend it. Indeed he was on the verge of starvation at the time and it would have been suicide to have attempted to scale the snowed heights.

The terrible experiences of Allen discouraged further explorations by the party of the Copper and when, in 1890, I entered Alaska for the second time, I attempted to reach Mount Wrangell by a new avenue of approach, viz., from the Yukon river. This route necessitated an overland march of 300 miles from the Yukon river, and when provisions became exhausted my party was still fully forty miles from the volcano and tangled up in a labyrinth of mountain ranges. Gigantic peaks, snowcapped, devoid of vegetation and animal life, barred our progress in front, and an attempt to scale them, with nothing to eat and naught in sight, would have been sheer madness. So a circle was made to the northwest, crossing Allen's trail, and invite the trio into the vestry room there to discuss the business. Luckily for him, it speedily leaked out that there had been no legal residence in his parish, which afforded him at once a solid ground for declining to perform the ceremony.

On another occasion the awful discovery was made that the bride had by accident been described in the marriage license by her pet name. It was suggested that an affidavit of identity sworn at a neighboring police court might repair the blunder. This was done just in time to complete the ceremony but the bridegroom afterward received a stern admonition from high quarters "not to do it again."—Cornhill Magazine.

The Care of Brushes.

Do not neglect your paint brushes. Dip them in oil and contain them in a box, kerosene or turpentine, then wash thoroughly with soap and hot water.

Painting Experience.

It was the lot of a young person to be embarrassed by the appeals of two young women who wanted to marry the same bridegroom. The first came of these had scarcely told her how her beloved lover had actually picked up the banns in the East End parish when the delinquent turned up with an idiotic grin on his face and a gayly apparelled young woman at his arm. What could the person—then a young and bashful curate—do but invite the trio into the vestry room, there to discuss the business. Luckily for him, it speedily leaked out that there had been no legal residence in his parish, which afforded him at once a solid ground for declining to perform the ceremony.

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